Siberian Elm

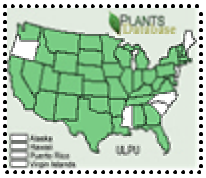
Ulmus pumila L.

NATIVE RANGE: Northern China, eastern Siberia, Manchuria and Korea

DESCRIPTION: Siberian elm is a fast-growing tree in the elm family (Ulmaceae). Mature trees reach a height of 50-70 ft. (16-22 m.), with a round crown of slender, spreading branches. The small, smooth, dark green toothed **leaves** are about 1-2½ inches (3-7 cm) long wide, and pointed at the tip. The **bark** is rough, gray or brown, and shallowly furrowed at maturity. **Twigs** are nearly hairless with small, blunt buds. Small green spring **flowers** lack petals and occur in drooping clusters of 2 to 5. After flowering, a single **seed** forms in the center of each smooth, flattened, circular, ½ in (10-15 mm) wide fruit.

ECOLOGICAL THREAT: Dry to mesic prairies and stream banks are vulnerable to Siberian elm invasion. Thickets of seedlings soon form around seed-producing trees, bare ground areas, animal and insect mounds, and other disturbed areas. Wind carries seed to distant areas where new colonies can form. This tough exotic survives under conditions not easily tolerated by other species, allowing it to take advantage of open ground and resources otherwise used by native plants. Fast growing seedlings of Siberian elm quickly overtake native vegetation, especially shade-intolerant species. This often leads to invasion by additional weedy species, compounding the problem.

DISTRIBUTION IN THE UNITED STATES: Siberian elm is known to occur in 43 states and reported to be invasive in natural areas in 25 states (AZ, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, MA, MD, MI, MN, MO, NE, NM, NV, OH, OK, OR, PA, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI, WV).



HABITAT IN THE UNITED STATES: Dry and mesic prairies and areas along stream banks in Minnesota and forested areas and high elevations in Arizona.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: For long term management of Siberian elm, reduction of seed sources is essential. ***Manual-*** During the growing season, seedlings can be hand pulled and girdled. On sites with few seed sources, the large trees can be cut down and resprouts trimmed. ***Chemical-***To avoid resprouts after cutting or girdling, cut stumps may be treated with systemic herbicides such as glyphosate (e.g., Roundup) and triclopyr (e.g., Garlon). ***Other-*** A regular regime of prescribed burning in fire-adapted communities will kill seedlings.

REFERENCES: http://plants.usda.gov, www.nps.gov/plants/alien